



Research and Reference Service

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE CUBAN SITUATION
(As of 8 a. m.)

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SUMMARY

"Where's the Catch?" asks Britain's Daily Sketch today in the wake of Khrushchev's promise to pull back his rockets.

Most commentators in the Free World hail the release of tension, with a tendency to wonder about the sudden Soviet retreat. In Europe and the Far East the Soviet move often is characterized as a "spectacular concession" or "total capitulation."

Unanimity is easier to find in the Soviet Bloc where almost everyone is praising Khrushchev, the peacemaker. Pravda writes that the Soviet people are "unanimous in their approval" of Khrushchev's new message. The working people of the country support the wise policy of the Soviet government, Pravda continues. Even in a most complicated situation the Soviet Union finds a way to avert the threat of thermonuclear war.

From a propaganda standpoint, the great peacemaker stance is the one fallback position which has been developed throughout the crisis.

Peking is sulking, reporting without comment, the Khrushchev order to dismantle the bases. The Albanian radio goes so far as to say the West regards the exchange as a "victory for American diplomacy."

All morning papers in Japan feature the Soviet decision to withdraw and President Kennedy's approving reply. Sankei's Washington correspondent says the Soviet Union has accepted virtually all U.S. demands. Tokyo Shimbun and Yomiuri see the withdrawal as a result of the President's firm stand. There is an odd lack of jubilation in Japanese comment with editors still expecting a hitch.

General relief with a note of caution was expressed in Europe. The Guardian speculates that Khrushchev may be deposed for undertaking to leave Cuba without getting anything in return. The Daily Express said the U.S. has scored "an immense diplomatic victory."

SOVIET BLOC

Within the next 12 hours the world undoubtedly will be exposed to a massive Soviet propaganda barrage. Somehow it will try to tie together the many loose strands of Moscow's rapid changes of position. So far, the most conspicuous ingredient of Soviet propaganda is the dirth of original commentary. Pravda of this morning publishes the latest Khrushchev letter, as Moscow media begin to tackle the complex propaganda situation created by Khrushchev's zig-zag moves in public.

Immediately preceding the October 28 letter, Soviet propaganda seemed to be marking time. Media did not mention the President's rejection of the bases swap proposal. At the same time there was a declining emphasis on warnings of the risks incurred by U.S. actions, and a considerable decline in the undertones of belligerence. One theme remained prominent: The maturity of Soviet moves, and concern over the protection of world peace.

Although there is as yet little original comment from Moscow media, some straws in the wind point toward upcoming propaganda along this major line: What the Soviet Union in the person of Khrushchev has done is a wise and peaceful move which has gratified people all over the world. This morning, Pravda writes about this "wise" move of the Soviet regime, "which even in a most complicated situation finds a way to avert the threat of thermonuclear war." Then there is extensive Moscow reportage of the feeling of immense satisfaction and relief experienced by other people. Soviet propagandists may argue eventually that it was as a result of careful and firm Soviet moves that the threat to the security of Cuba -- and to the world -- has now been removed.

The Bloc moved quickly to hail Khrushchev as a "peacemaker" and the man who "pulled the world back from the brink of nuclear catastrophe." Hungary even allows that it is "not impossible that Kennedy also will be mentioned in history, having shown some sense of reality." Initial Polish press reaction seems to be somewhat more cautious, as the morning papers call attention to the good prospects for a settlement of the Cuban crisis.

FAR EAST

All morning papers in Japan today feature the Soviet decision to withdraw its missile bases from Cuba, as well as President Kennedy's approving reply.

Sankei's Washington correspondent reports that inasmuch as the Soviet Union has accepted virtually all U.S. demands, "the Cuban problem is expected to head toward peaceful negotiations." The same correspondent notes also that the United States appeared "surprised at the one-sided concessions."

Tokyo Shimbun and Yomiuri see the Soviet decision to withdraw as the result of the firm stand taken by the President, and suggest that the development gives the United States the favorable position in any later negotiations.

All Japanese papers also carry the cautious statements issued by the Japanese Foreign Office and the Chief Cabinet Secretary welcoming the Soviet move to dismantle the bases.

There is an odd lack of jubilation in the comment from the Japanese papers, perhaps due to their disbelief at the unexpected Soviet proposal to abandon the bases. As if looking for a hitch still, Asahi reports Khrushchev's request that the United States give assurances that it would not invade Cuba. Asahi asks that the United States exercise "moral and political superiority" in its negotiations with the Soviet Union, in the interests of world peace.

Peking reports the Khrushchev order to dismantle the bases, both in the domestic press and in NCNA transmissions, but there is no comment.

WESTERN EUROPE

Editorials in Britain greeted the withdrawal offer with general relief today.

The Guardian speculates that Khrushchev may be deposed and predicts gloomily that "we should probably not be any better off." The paper wonders why Khrushchev has undertaken to leave Cuba without the promise of anything in return.

The Daily Telegraph is deeply relieved and says the principle of verification may lead to a breakthrough in the deadlock over disarmament and nuclear testing. The Daily Mail also says the acceptance of inspection could set an important precedent.

The Daily Sketch says the "spectacular concession" has primed the world for American concessions on its ring of bases around the USSR. The Financial Times says Khrushchev appears to have made a complete climbdown as a result of President Kennedy's resolute attitude, but cautions that it is always perilous to take Khrushchev at his face value.

The Sunday press in Britain was preoccupied with debates over whether or not to accept the Turkey-base deal. A Cuban settlement through negotiations was a favored position.

The Danish Domestic Service told its listeners the U.S. forced total capitulation by threatening to bomb Soviet rocket and jet bomber bases in Cuba within 24 hours and by mobilizing 24 squadrons of transport aircraft. This, according to the Danish radio, forced the Kremlin to decide whether to capitulate, allow an attack without resistance or to accept a war.

In Stockholm, Swedish foreign minister Thorsten Nilsson said he was relieved and satisfied at the latest developments in the Cuban crisis.

Finnish radio called Khrushchev's tone "exceptionally conciliatory." By linking the proposal to Kennedy's guarantee not to invade Cuba, Khrushchev was able to escape without the loss of prestige, the Finns said.

Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt said Sunday evening it would be wrong for Berliners to set their hopes too high. He urged caution and a wait-and-see attitude for the next few days. In a broadcast Brandt expressed the hope Berlin would feel something of the change through the world.

In Italy, Milan's Corriere Della Sera said Khrushchev "surrendered in the face of the U.S. President's firmness."

The Irish Press of Dublin said the immediate strain is over and "we can dismiss any apprehensions there may have been over the apparently foolhardiness of President Kennedy's terrible gamble a week ago. He has won it."

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NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

There are still indications that the available area reactions are trying to telescope two rapidly breaking events -- Khrushchev's swap proposal and his pull-out agreement -- into a meaningful whole. From Turkey, President Inonu calls the news "wonderful," and his Foreign Minister says that "with the dismantling of the bases, tension will disappear."

Israel sees a Khrushchev retreat in his latest move, and argues over the domestic radio that "he is trying to cover this up and present it before the world as a gesture of peace."

Syria apparently went all out. Addressing himself to Khrushchev, Premier Khalid Al-Azm said: "O great friend...I express our admiration and warm congratulations for your brave and noble stand that has saved humanity...."

LATIN AMERICA

No Latin American press reaction to Khrushchev's back-down has been reported as yet, but unofficial political circles in Argentina have expressed great satisfaction at the course of events. The Argentinians are pleased that their support of the U.S. position was expressed so unequivocally, in contrast to the "platonic" support of some neighboring countries. This Argentine faithfulness, it is reported, "cannot but have its reward."

Khrushchev's change of policy came in the nick of time for Brazil, in the throes of a boiling political controversy over whose side Brazil was really on. President Goulart of Brazil quickly welcomed Khrushchev's latest letter to the President as "an important contribution to world peace."

Bombings in the oil fields of Venezuela and a home-made bomb thrown against a U.S. company near Bogota, Colombia, were among the acts of violence apparently carried out by Cuban sympathizers.

CUBA

Castro's propaganda machine, caught off guard by the sudden reversal of Soviet policy on the bases, was silent for some three hours before it carried any reference to Khrushchev's October 28 letter to the President.

Fidel Castro himself made the first reference to Khrushchev's change of heart. He asked that the United States suspend its economic blockade of Cuba, prevent attacks on Cuba by refugees using American ports, and return the U.S. base at Guantanamo to Cuba. Castro apparently included these demands in an effort to show his people the crisis was not a total debacle for Cuba. A later speech by Fidel's brother underscores that Guantanamo is expected to be returned "peacefully." There is no reference to U.N. inspection.

Havana radio has reported that U Thant will come to Havana on Tuesday.

Extra editions of the Communist papers in Havana were issued immediately after Castro's speech. Hoy commented: "The final proposition of Comrade Khrushchev is a positive suggestion for finding an urgent exit from the crisis provoked by imperialism."